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SEASONABLE ADVICE

TO THE

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PEOPLE OF IRELAND,

People of.

DURING THE

P R E S E N T R E C E S S

OF

PARLIAMENT.

D U B L I N:

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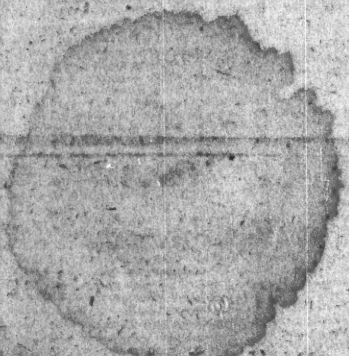
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TO THE

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PAKISTAN



D U R T I N

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SEASONABLE ADVICE

TO THE
PEOPLE OF IRELAND,

DURING THE

Present Recess of Parliament,

IF ever there was a crisis in which the fate of a kingdom depended on the discretion of its own inhabitants, it seems to be the present in Ireland; a crisis which demands our speedy and decisive resolution, whether we shall embrace without farther trouble, A Free Commerce, Civil Liberty in its fullest extent, and Domestic Peace; or stake all these advantages, which are in our actual possession, and play a higher game in hopes of obtaining something more.

We are told of a certain period, in the history of the Jewish people, when every man did that which was right in his own eyes; and Ireland is pretty much in the same situation; while every military corps of fifty men is a little independent republic, and so perfectly democratic, that even its officers authority is only in proportion to their personal influence.

When every individual is thus at liberty how he will act, the privilege of giving advice ought to be equally general: every inhabitant of Ireland is interested in the event, and has a right to offer his sentiments to your consideration.

The point to be discussed is, Whether the People of Ireland ought for the present to rest satisfied with the concessions already obtained from Great Britain, and join their arms with hers against the common enemy, or take advantage of her critical situation to extort from

from her the only mark of her former supremacy.

The other subject of our discontent is the law of Poynings, a grievance which, if it be one, is of our own enacting. Let us then proceed to enquire, 1. Are these matters of sufficient importance to us, to continue any longer the interruption of that perfect harmony between the two nations which our common safety now requires?—2. Can Great Britain formally renounce that supremacy she has so long possessed, unless compelled by superior force.—3. Are we likely to succeed in such an attempt?—4. What must be the consequence of making the experiment.—5. What must be the consequence if we succeed in the attempt?—6. What must be our situation if we fail?

The law of Poynings has been a popular subject of complaint for more than a century past; but however the introduction of a third power into the Irish legislature may have encroached upon the

the ancient rights of parliament, the people at large have been rather benefited than injured by the inovation, so that whatever advantage might arise from any alteration in this part of the constitution, not they but their representatives would be the gainers. This famous law was once as popular as it is now odious: it was enacted on the petition of the Irish, to check the influence of their viceroys over corrupt parliaments, and to preserve the natives from oppressive laws, by the more immediate protection of the English monarch, whose necessary absence from this his kingdom was to be in some measure supplied by his council in Ireland; and as the same circumstance of the king's absence still subsists, it is not easy to see how a better method of conveying honest and correct information to the throne, of the real state of his realm, and the wants of his subjects, could be devised, than by a select body composed of the principal members of both houses of parliament and the chiefs
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of the law, sworn to execute with fidelity that important trust. Let any person take the trouble of casting his eye over the list of the privy council, and see of what names and characters it consists; he will there see the highest, the most independent, the wealthiest, and many of the most popular men in the kingdom, men equally above influence or corruption, such as he would himself select to be the guardians of his country's interests if he had not seen them on that list. And is not this a more unexceptionable channel to convey the wants and wishes of Ireland to the throne, than the British attorney general, who if well affected towards us, would be ill informed, or if informed, must rely upon the representation of the lord lieutenant, or perhaps some self-interested individual.

I will not however deny, that some popular bills have been stopped in their progress to the throne by this intermediate power; but they have rarely been any that would not have been rejected if
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they had reached it; and they have more than made amends to the public by the assistance they have given to many others, which would never have obtained the royal assent if they had not been enforced by the recommendations of the Irish privy council. The resumption therefore of this power, by the repeal of Poynings law, may be severely lamented by the people of Ireland hereafter, however they may rejoice at it in the present moment; for they may find when it is too late, that their indigent or ambitious representatives (whose votes in parliament will considerably rise in value by this measure) will be the only gainers by its being adopted.

As to the supremacy of the British parliament over this kingdom, it has been a yoke that we have sorely felt, a power to which we have long submitted, but never without reluctance. It is remarkable that this power has at no time been so severely exerted to the detriment and disgrace of Ireland, as it was under those
princes

princes whose reigns have been esteemed most favourable to the liberties of these nations. King William, and King George the First, from whom this kingdom deserved more gentle treatment, as she so eminently contributed to establish the first upon the throne of Britain, and was so affectionately zealous in her attachment to the succession and government of the latter; yet in no reign before or since were acts passed so destructive to the liberty and property of Ireland as in theirs. In the reign of King George the Second we have little of that nature to complain of, and in the present still less. A general disposition to promote the interests of Ireland, and to remove all her complaints, seems to have prevailed through Great Britain (especially among her ministers) for many years past; though the fear of causing disturbances at home among interested monopolists, and the watchful eye of an uncandid opposition ever ready to charge administration with betraying the interests of their

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country,

country, has hitherto prevented them from carrying these favourable dispositions into effect. But even among those British acts extending to Ireland which we complain of, I do not recollect any that were really injurious to us, except the restrictions upon our trade; as to the rest, our national honour might feel some resentment at being obliged to submit to laws enacted without our consent, but neither our properties, nor our civil liberties were concerned, except in such as restrained our commerce and discouraged our internal industry. These were the real injuries which Ireland complained of with justice, grievances which would perhaps have excused any exertions on our part to have obtained the removal of them.

A concurrence of circumstances, melancholy indeed to the British empire, but fortunate for Ireland in this respect, has given courage to the friends and terror to the enemies of its interests, so as to enable the first to exert themselves in
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its favour with success, and to prevent all effectual attempts of the others to oppose them. With an unanimity scarce credible the British parliament has, by one act, set our commerce entirely free as its own, and by another given us an equal share of trade to all those colonies and plantations to which, by the law of nature and nations, Great Britain undoubtedly possessed an exclusive right. The first of these acts is an act of justice, complete in its kind, and therefore ought to be considered in the light of full satisfaction on that head. The second is an act of free grace and favour, and therefore ought to be accepted with thanks, as an instance of brotherly affection and good will, in thus communicating to us all their own advantages, without any share of their burthens, without demanding from us any retribution or equivalent whatsoever.

From this period a fair prospect of national wealth, happiness, and prosperity, opens upon our view, if our own hands

do not change the scene; industry, population, agriculture, and all the consequences of a free communication with every nation upon the globe, will soon improve the face of this long-neglected island, and make it appear in as rich a dress as its native beauty deserves to wear; and if that poverty which has been the effect of our former discouragements, should at first prevent us from taking advantage of the liberty we now enjoy, the wealth of England will soon be poured in upon us, to establish manufactures where the cheapness of labour will enable them to be pursued with so much advantage, and commerce, in our ports which are so much better situated than their own: in short we may from this moment become a great and flourishing people if we please.

But it may be said, that "Though our commerce and our civil liberties are exactly in the situation we could wish, we have still something more to ask,
and

and while we have the power in our hands to enforce our petitions, let us seize this opportunity to assert the entire independence of our country, and if it is not granted we are strong enough to take it for ourselves."

Let us therefore in the first place consider, whether we are likely to obtain this concession from Great Britain upon demand: as this assumed supremacy of her legislature is the only remaining badge of her superiority as the mother country and the seat of empire, though it may be natural for Ireland to wish that even this mark of her secondary rank might be obliterated, it is as natural for Britain to exert her utmost efforts to retain it.

To persuade her to a formal renunciation of this point of honour, by any other means than the actual exertion of superior force, is a vain idea; she cannot cede this claim till compelled to it by her inability to support it; but prudence

dence may induce her never more to attempt the actual exercise of it, which as this country becomes more opulent and important, will daily become more impracticable. The resistance of America, with all its dreadful train of consequences, will certainly teach her a lesson of moderation ; and the present state of that miserable country, which, after a war of four years, is yet far enough from having obtained its favourite object, and in the mean time sees its property exhausted, its commerce ruined, its lands and cities desolate, and its civil liberties oppressed ; should teach us how tenacious we shall find Great Britain of a point in which her honour is concerned, and that nothing but a decisive war in which we shall be able to defeat her in all her exertions, will ever induce her to renounce it.

When we consider the miseries to which this country would be exposed by a civil war, (which must be obvious to all

all who know its peculiar circumstances) it cannot be supposed that any one who has any regard to himself, would wish to see it lighted up for the sake of an object in which, however his country's pride may be affected, its real interests are so little concerned, the obtaining of which would be too dearly purchased with the expense of one summer's campaign, though with a certainty of success.

But, alas! the success of such an attempt is scarce within the bounds of probability, for numerous and formidable as our volunteer companies may justly be considered, while they are united in defence of their country against the common enemy, and in support of its laws, if they were to be called out into action in such a cause we should soon see division take place among them: on the one side would range all the property of the kingdom, the friends of the constitution, and the real patriots, who, though their voice is not so loud as the clamours of sedition, are a much more numerous and powerful

ful body than is generally imagined: on the other side we should see bankruptcy and ambition, availing itself of the passions of private revenge and popular madness, to climb up to riches and power upon the ruins of their country, assisted by the secret emissaries of France and America, many of whom are now lurking in disguise throughout the kingdom.

Which party would be the most numerous I hope will hardly admit of a dispute, especially as the well-affected will draw all those to their side who have no principles but regard to their present ease and security, who will then be furnished with so good an excuse for withdrawing their personal service from a cause which they do not approve.

To how small a remnant all these defections will reduce that now respectable body, the Volunteers of Ireland, it is easy to conceive; and can the republican party imagine, that with these reliques

liques of an army they can sustain the weight of British power exerted in a just cause, assisted by the whole regular force of the kingdom, its landed interest, and even by many of those who are now their fellow soldiers while they are not yet declared enemies to the peace and constitution of their country?

But if the legal force now subsisting in these kingdoms should even be supposed insufficient to subdue them, a further assistance will easily be obtained without going abroad to seek it. A writer of their own party (under the signature of O'Neil) has very justly observed, that nations have no religion; viz. that in great political measures, the cause of any religion is very little considered. If Great Britain therefore should find that the Protestants of Ireland are become its worst enemies, do we suppose that any scruple of conscience would deter them from accepting the offers of the Papists on good conditions, to assist

in preventing the connexion between the two kingdoms from being dissolved? It is well known that the Irish Roman Catholics make no difficulty of declaring their perfect satisfaction under the mild government of the house of Brunswic, and it is not to be doubted but they would adhere to their allegiance to his Britannic majesty, much sooner than submit to the dominion of their Protestant fellow subjects in a free republic: and though confiscations and the re-possession of their ancient estates could hardly be held out to them as an encouragement, (because few Protestants of landed property will ever seriously involve themselves in such a rebellion; whatever language they may speak at present) yet the offer of a more perfect toleration than they can ever hope to obtain from an Irish parliament, and the flattering prospect of retaliation upon that interest to which they have been forced to crouch for near a century past, will operate upon them with sufficient force

force to produce all the effect that England can desire. You already know what proportion their numbers bear to your own; the comparison has always been alarming: think of them armed and supported by Great Britain, with all the friends of the present constitution in Ireland on the same side. The final result of so unequal a contest may easily be foreseen, supposing Ireland was left to decide the dispute within itself.

But should the champions of independence, contrary to all probability, prevail, by the neutrality or assistance of the Roman Catholics, what would be the consequence at last to the Protestant interest in this kingdom? It is a notorious truth, that in all countries not under the protection or dominion of a foreign power, the religion professed by the majority of the people must finally prevail, and become the religion of the state; thus did Christianity rise upon the ruins of Paganism, after having spread its roots for more than three centuries in

subjection; thus rose the Protestant religion in Scotland, in defiance of the established power; and thus will Popery in Ireland, if ever this country be withdrawn from the protection of Great Britain. The Protestant interest may perhaps preserve the supremacy, while the arms they have used to obtain it are still bright, and they who have fought for the cause still embodied to support it; but when peace shall have been re-established, and religious as well as civil affairs left to the protection of the laws, then will the restless spirit of popery soon shew and exert itself, conscious of its own strength and numbers, and of foreign assistance if necessary; and the Protestant cause, having lost the protection of that power who planted it in this island, but will then look on its distress with unconcern, perhaps with complacency, after a few vain struggles must yield, and be glad to accept of a toleration, if its rivals are so generous as to grant it.

Such,

Such, my countrymen, are the natural consequences of your success in an effort to establish yourselves independent of Great Britain by force of arms.

But what would be the result of an unsuccessful attempt? — Desolation, ruin, and destruction, during the strife; and poverty, misery, contempt, and slavery, in the conclusion: the loss of those civil liberties which we now enjoy, and the resumption of that political liberty of which we already possess every thing but the name.

That factious spirit of revolt which now seems so busy among us has already been the ruin of this country more than once, and the example of our ancestors ought to be an awful warning to ourselves. The Popish interest in 1641 declared for this favourite idea of independence on the British government, though it continued to profess its allegiance to the king; the war commenced with plunder and massacre, and ended in
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a general devastation of the whole island from north to south. Great Britain, at that time sufficiently occupied by civil commotions at home, suffered us to destroy one another for near ten years, and when we were thus reduced to the lowest state of weakness and confusion, peace being then re-established in England, the avenging sword of Cromwell came upon us, who in one bloody campaign completed the subjection of us to himself and his victorious army, and divided the lands among his soldiers and adventurers, leaving us without a parliament or constitution, in the condition of a chartered colony instead of an independent kingdom.

The restoration of royalty gave back to Ireland some of those rights which she would never have recovered if the British republic had continued to exist; but the scars of her former wounds still remained; her liberties were far short of those she had enjoyed before her rebellion.

Another

Another effort for independency was made at the period of the glorious revolution, when King James in a parliament at Dublin passed a law, declaring that Ireland was not subject to Great Britain. The Protestants of Ireland in those days assisted their great deliverer to restore that dependence in which they were wise enough to see that their own security consisted. But, unfortunately, these irregular attempts to break the connexion with England had excited a jealousy against the nation at large, and procured in that reign some acts of the British parliament injurious both to the liberties and honour of this kingdom.

In short every unsuccessful attempt of this nature must always tend to put the vanquished party in a much worse situation than they were before: and though I admit this to be no reason that should prevent or discourage a brave people from having recourse to arms, when unjust oppression or insupportable griev-

grievances have provoked them; yet it is a substantial one to deter them from trying so dangerous and so doubtful a remedy, when grievances are trifling or imaginary, and every thing that is dear and valuable to men must be staked upon the success.

I shall only take a short revision of the foregoing facts and observations.

It appears that England has already ceded and restored to us every thing we can ask or wish, except a formal renunciation of her supremacy, (for as to Poyning's law, it is an affair of our own legislation) and it is highly probable that even this claim will lye dormant for the future, like her claim to the crown of France, which she continues to assume even in her treaties with the Most Christian King, without offence; so that we should consider it as a point of honour, to resign which would endanger her domestic peace; and it would be ungenerous in us to insist on what she cannot

cannot grant. If we demand this sacrifice, she durst not make it, and if we attempt to vindicate the claim by force, we assuredly plunge ourselves into the midst of a civil war in an unjustifiable cause, with little probability of success even without her interposition, still less if she adds her force to that of the well-affected among us, who I trust are much more numerous than the seditious, tho' the time is not yet come to make the distinction.

That such a war would be unjust in its commencement, ruinous in its prosecution, fatal to our religion, if it should succeed; and if it should fail of success, (which is more than probable) besides all these evils, we should lose even those liberties which we are so ambitious of enlarging, and be forced to accept such a constitution as our conquerors might be pleased to grant us, and while we grasped at the shadow of independence, should lose the substance which is already in our possession.

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There may perhaps be several who will admit all these facts and conclusions as I have stated them, who abhor the thoughts of a civil war, and see all its evils in a just light; who have no idea of coming to extremities: but they think the times are propitious to the cause of independence, and though they do not mean to purchase it at the expence of blood, they imagine that if it is demanded "in a menacing tone, it will be granted; that it is at least worth making the experiment, and if it should fail, we are but in the same situation we were before."

It is an observation of Rochefaucault's, *That no people go so far as those who know not how far they are going.* This is the very point to which the enemies of our constitution, and the emissaries of France and America, want to lead the high-spirited and undesigning friends to liberty and their country; thus pushing them on step by step, till it is too late to recede; urging them gradually from
instruc-

instructions to remonstrances, from remonstrances to insurrection, and from insurrection to actual rebellion. The mind of man is always exasperated by denial, however impeachable be the request; and if the passions are once raised to resentment, the next step is revenge. Those who have ill designs are well assured, that Great Britain cannot renounce her supremacy over Ireland, while her contest with America continues; and for that very reason they would urge the demand; some cause of quarrel they require, and this is now the only pretence that the justice and generosity of Britain has left them.

If on the other hand we should make the requisition, and yet acquiesce in the refusal, we should become the scorn of other nations, as well as our British fellow subjects who now look towards us with affection and respect; we shall provoke those who have hitherto been our friends, and verify the only argument our enemies had to justify them for not

concurring with the king and his ministers in restoring us to our commercial rights, viz. that Ireland would not be satisfied after her demands were granted, though an equal trade to the British dominions abroad was added as a peace-offering unsolicited. We have it now in our power to be a great, happy, and hereafter a rich and flourishing people, if we know when to be *content*.

To you, therefore, our worthy Representatives in Parliament, we first look up for protection, imploring you to preserve your country's peace; it is to your firmness and unanimity we owe the high advantages that we have obtained, and it is to your wisdom and moderation we expect to owe the enjoyment of them: suffer not the menaces of a mercenary or misguided multitude to intimidate, nor the declamations of venal or seditious orators to seduce you from that steady line of true constitutional patriotism, which will in the end settle the minds, as well as the liberties and properties

perties of your constituents, and make this parliament the pride and boast of the present age, as well as the idol of posterity.

Ye brave Sons of Ireland, who, with a disinterested magnanimity unknown to former ages or other nations, in the hour of danger, when a foreign enemy threatened our coasts with invasion, did voluntarily stand forth in her defence; who with an unexampled moderation, unrestrained by any power but the ties of honour and justice, have been so far from violating the properties of others, that the laws of your country have in many instances looked up to you for protection, and in none been resisted or infringed; equally prepared to vindicate the just rights of the people from oppression, or legal authority from insult or resistance: — O! turn not those swords against your country's peace which you have so gloriously assumed in its defence. —

—Ne tanta animis affuescite bella:

Neu patriæ validas in viscera vertite vires.

Reserve

Reserve that strength, to employ it
 against the common enemy, which, join-
 ed with the arms of Britain, will be in-
 vincible; and cannot be otherwise ex-
 orted, without bringing dishonour upon
 yourselves and certain desolation upon
 your country. Suffer not the emissaries
 of faction to instil groundless discontents
 into your honest and ingenuous minds,
 to serve their own malice or ambition.
 Place an entire confidence in the wisdom
 and integrity of your uncorrupt repres-
 sentatives; urge them not by petitions
 or instructions fabricated by prejudice
 and ignorance, or perhaps worse motives.
 Leave the management of your interests
 to those whose situation enables them
 best to comprehend and pursue them
 with effect, instead of endeavouring to
 pre-engage them to follow any line of
 conduct, except such as they see best
 upon full information and debate. Their
 patriotic behaviour well deserves this,
 and every other mark of your confidence.
 If they tell you all is well, be assured
 that

that they have just cause to assert it, in spite of the factious clamour of interested individuals, or the treasonable publications of mercenary printers.

The black clouds which lately hung over the British empire now seem to be dispersing on all sides, and its ascendancy over its united enemies is already reassumed: an honourable peace with all its ancient dependencies seems to be an event at no great distance. The dawn of Ireland's happiness and future greatness is come, the day of it is at hand; the glorious conduct of her own sons has opened the flattering prospect before her eyes, and nothing but their intemperate zeal can fatally cloud the scene.

F I N I S.

